

(Copyright, 1910, by the New York Herald Co. All rights reserved.) IVE years ago I left Fayettesville, a small happy and very blessed in her husband and children. Southern town, and went to New York to earn my own living.

I was not forced to do this through the great talent of which I was loath to deprive the world as an excuse for coming: I do not think I ever dreamed of becoming famous, nor had I a great ambition to better mankind or to make life more beau- other and smile when he turned in at our gate, tiful for the downtrodden masses. Seeing things in the light of the knowledge I now possess, I think that I left home and went to the city because I wanted most of all to be free-just to live my own life in my own way; to assert myself as an individual, free to think and act as I pleased.

In a small town where one has been born and bred only a genius may so assert himself, and even a genius is regarded somewhat in the light that a haunted house is looked upon-as a matter for uncanny speculation; something that attracts but at the same time repels, and is, unconditionally and out of a vast ignorance, condemned.

But I was not a genius-I was only an ordinary sort of a girl. I had grown to womanhood (I was then twenty) and possessed a woman's power to think and judge for myself; but to Fayettesville I was still a child. The recollection of a pale-faced, big-eyed, thin-legged little girl in pinafore and braids was all too freshly green in the memory of the town's people, and though my skirts were long since let down to a more discreet length and my hair done in a remarkable imitation of a vogue head dress (artist unknown, God rest his soul!), yet, despite this fact, the nearest approach to respect for my years was vouchsafed in their allusion to me as "Al Prue's

Now there is no such thing as reserve in Fayettesville. It is an unwritten law there that each family's private life belongs to the community at large, the inudents thereof furnishing a common fund of interest, and it is the duty of each citizen to provide what inrident be can that he may thereby lighten the days of

Things were just like that at home, too, only more o. There were six of us in the family-father, mother and three girls, besides myself. I had an older where over the earth. No one ever spoke of him; he was the outcast because he had gotten into some sort of trouble (I never knew just what), and father was awfully bitter about it. The general verdict against him in Favettesville was that he was no good. Mother grieved in silence, but I envied him. He was free!

For instance, I could not go for a walk on a Sunday spring morning because I must go to church with the

It was improper to have a light in the parlor after ten o'clock at night and immoral to be seen on the street with a man after eleven.

I had to darn stockings for the family because I happened to be the oldest girl. Mother had been the oldest girl, and she had darned stockings for her lo! instead of old Mr. Mathews there appeared a mother's family. I loathed to darn, and it hurt my stranger coming up the path. Mother's hand fluteyes, too-but if I said anything about it there were tered up to smooth her hair. "That's Mr. Mathews' pleasant allusions to the fact that I managed to get young assistant," she whispered. through a novel without any serious injury to my

## The Rebellion.

I wasn't lazy. I was willing to work, but I wanted to do my work in joy, not in drudgery. I wanted to be free to grow just as a young tree grows, according to the law of its own nature. I wanted to get away from restrictions that bound me like chains.

I did not think of all these things then. I only felt and silently resented and finally rebelled openly and declared for independence. It came about this way. The summer of 19- was intensely hot and an epidemic of slow fever swept Fayettesville. Mother and two of the children were stricken with It. That meant a summer of nursing with the household topsyturvy and every one's nerves on edge.

Oh. those long, hot, sultry days! Gray walls seemed to loom up about me and shut out the world where there was sunshine and joy and life.

I was resentful of my own mother's illness-that was an ugly phase of my nature, grown up out of the conditions surrounding me-for I loved my mother tenderly. But stronger even than my love for her was the desire for freedom. She was a link in the chain that bound me, and I wanted to be free.

Of all the days to be lived through Sunday seemed the worst. An added gloom of awful piety settled apon us. I could not be spared to go to church, but lather went because he had not missed service in twenty-six years. Mr. Mathews came over always in the afternoon after Bible class and sat on the porch. He never failed to remind us that illness was a punishment for sin.

During those days I almost grew to hate that poor old man, and at the sight of him wabbling up the path

I have dad it. Subtree displayed father wilfully, but now father was in the wrong. It would have been a simple enough thing to have said:—"He sent you a gift and father returned it." Yet I kept silent. I have fled to mother's room, pretending there was need of me there, and felt a secret joy in thus deceiving him.

Toward the end of summer the ill were free of fever, but mother, particularly, was slow to gain her strength. She required constant care and attention. Father had suffered under the nervous strain, and often became unreasonable and irritable.

It was at this stage that a letter came from my brother, who had found work in a mining camp comewhere in Nevada. He was making money and

## LEAVES HOME

ache rather than go out with him, returned a certain amount that father had lent to

him five years before. Along with the letter he sent a little gift for mother.

He knew nothing of the illness and trouble we had endured, and he meant to do only what was fair, but somehow the return of the money coming just when it did seemed to infuriate father. He was more than unreasonable-he was cruel and unjust, for he returned the check and the little gift for mother without even showing it to her.

I think that it was this act of father's that aroused me to a consciousness of the revolt that was seething within my heart. By what right did he deny to mother what was hers? What right had he to forbid me to speak the truth to mother? Why did I not tell her, since I felt that she should know? To my resentment was now added a deep sense of injustice and of wrong.

So the days were on, one like another, except Sunday, which was worse, only for the fact that I had got out of the habit of going to church. The others

We grew closer to each other than we had ever been before. Mother was beginning to tell me secrets. of her real life. She had, it seemed, always longed to travel, to go over the wide world, but of course that had never been possible, she had married s young. Then there had been the children and her duties to keep her at home. But I must not think she was complaining-indeed, no! She had been ?

I, too, on my side had made little confidences. stress of financial circumstances. I had no She knew something of my aversion for Mr. Mathews and we had actually laughed together over illness being a punishment for sin. This, however, was an immense secret between us. We would look at each

One Sunday afternoon mother and I were alone on the porch and at the appointed hour of visitation.

## The Taste of Freedom.

One afternoon in early October we had been for a walk in the country. It was beautiful out of doors; the leaves were rich with color; the air cool and fresh the leaves were rich with color; the air cool and fresh and everything had such a full-to-the-brim look. The Little Minister had been talking to me about life in the West and the splendid freedom of it, and I feit thrilled. We had seemed that afternoon like good who understood without many words. The comrades who understood without many words. The current of our separate thoughts had merged into one stream—a happy, laughing little stream that ran along merrily—a glint of romance touching it into joyous life. Then just a snag of chance changed the current and the little stream swerved and again was swallowed by

the waters of the deadly commonplace.

As we turned into the court house square there, in full view from where we were, stood Farmer Green's haystack. That haystack marked the limit of fown. It seemed to say, "So far and no further." Stolid it

I saw him content, absurdly content, to live so, that the Little Minister no longer came to the home-hi maybe it was nervousness. I do not know— but she forbore comment. Oh! maybe it was nervousness. I do not know—but I laughed. I laughed and he knew that I knew that he was proposing. At first he was hurt, then angry, and I couldn't explain; there wasn't anything angry, and I couldn't explain; there wasn't anything to explain that he would understand. We walked to explain that he would understand. We walked home in slience and he left me at the gate.

I stood and watched him merge into the twilight grayness and then I went on to the house. Father was standing on the porch alone. I saw that something was wrong. His face was white and he was reading a telegram. I ran to him. He caught my arm like a vise. Just then mother came out on the porch. She read father's face and caught sight of the telegram before he could hide it.

She went to him swiftly. "What is it?" she whispered. "What is it?" and then before he could reply, she said, "I know-it is my boy-he is dead." Father seemed dazed—unable to speak, I knew that he tried to prevent mother's seeing the telegram to save her from pain, but when she said, "Give it to me," something in her voice made him comply.

them to mother.

In the package was a half completed letter to me written soon after be had left home. When I read if the meaning of the words rose up like a flame before eyes, clearing away the mists and showing me how things stood for me.

## Courage to Go.

The letter said:—"I wish that you were here with me; you would like it. I feel so free. We got control of a batch of men now and they call me 'Mister. It's great. A fellow gets sick of being called 'kid' ali the time. Mother's going to be proud of me yet."—

I folded the letter and held it tight in my hand The touch of it gave me courage, and then I wendown to father and mother. They looked up at me when I entered the room.

when I entered the room.

Mother smiled and held out her hand. I went to

her and took it. She had been crying. Then I turned

to father.

"I have decided to go away and earn my own living." I said bluntly, and that is not the way I had meant to put it, but the words came of themselves.

Father did not reply, and mother's clasp tightened

on my hand. "I'm not going to marry," I went on, "I don't wanf to marry. I'm old enough to work, and I want to be



I observed him with much real interest. I dare say he was young, but his was one of those faces that are old from childhood and would not, I knew, appear any older for years to come.

He was pale and wore glasses, and his shoulders stooped a little as he walked. But then he wore, too, a flower in his buttonhole, and he was not Mr. Mathews! He was a stranger, something out of the ordinary: a light breaking the gray monotony of the every day. I felt curlously thrilled as I rose to meet

"Dr. Mathews is ill," he told mother, and be had asked the privilege of coming instead.

I was disappointed in his voice; it lacked something, but he was very nice. He talked pleasantly and he laughed, actually laughed twice. Evidently he did not think that illness was a punishment for sin. He told us about his life out West, where he had gone one year for his health, and about his experlences in a mining camp, all about the life and the

rough, big hearted miners. I liked that and was terribly interested until I happened to glance at mother, who had grown quite pale. He saw it too (he was quick that way), and thought, no doubt, that he had tired her, so he rose to go, Mother made him promise to come again. She liked him, too, and as he went away mother watched

him out of sight. She appeared wistful. s been about a good deal, I suppose," she said,

and sighed. And then I knew why she had grown pale. was thinking of my brother, the outcast. I remembered the gift and my heart smote me. Why did I not tell her? Why? Was I afraid? Afraid of I had never disobeyed father wilfully, but

In a few moments father and the children came in at the gate. They had seen our visitor leave. It was then one of the girls dubbed him "The Little Minister." And the name suited him perfectly.

He came every Sunday after that, and then he began coming now and then during the week. Of course the children teased, but he always asked for everybody. I did not know whether I liked him or not. Sometimes I did, and then again he just seemed

to merge into the general grayness of things
Autumn came. People began to talk about "The
Little Minister's" being in love with me. Mother and father were pleased (I could see that), and I began to regard him with a proprietary air,

and I left them all behind," stood, complacent and uncompromising. The sight of it roused all the old resentment against the shut-in-ness

"Then the train started in earnest,

Then that stupid, stupid man also noticed the haystack and this is what he said:—
"Do you know, I think that there is something quaint about standing in the heart of town and seeing

Quaint! Ye gods! If he had only said anything but that it was quaint! An unreasonableness equal to my father's seized me.

I looked at him. His glasses vexed me. I did not like the pale color of his hair. I had never noticed before how thin it was. And his hands! What an unhealthy All the thrill had left me! "You like a small town, don't you?" I asked, and my voice sounded like a tack hammer striking brass.

He was flicking the heads off the weeds with his cane and did not look at me; but his face grew a "I do like it-yes-I could-that is, I"- he

stammered. And it came to me with the swiftness of lightning. He was about to propose. I had a vision of my-self in the rectory where I could see the quaint haystack from the east window. I would grow middle aged and fat, and he would become thin and hald, and my eldest daughter would darn stockings beand my eldest daughter would darn s cause I had darned when I was young.

ignorance as mine!

I thought of the gift. When she had read the message, she grew still and white. After a little, she said in a voice that sounded like an echo:-"My little of anything to say, sald in a voice that sounded like an echo:boy, my own little boy. He took his own life; he took

Then her face twisted in sudden agony, and she cried out in anguish:—'Oh, God! I could bear if only he had sent me some word—me, his mother I did not give my father a chance to make his confession—his atonement. The truth that had so long cried out in my heart for utterance burst from

my lips.
"He did send you a message—a gift—but father

his own life."

"He did send you a message—a gift—but father would not let you see it; he sent it back."

Mother looked at me as if I had been mad; then, when she began to comprehend, she turned to father. I hope I may never again see such a look of shame upon any human face as was written on father's. I could have cried out in pity for him. And mother I could have cried out in pity for him. And mother the strength of man, to fight your own fight to live your strength of man, to fight your own fight to live your I hope I may never again see such a look of shame upon any human face as was written on father's. I could have cried out in pity for him. And mother saw and understood. She did a beautiful thing; she went to him and took his hands in her own. "It was went to him and took his hands in her own. "It was a mistake, dear," she said. "We have done him a great wrong—our little boy."

And I knew then that she had forgiven him. She and father against all else! I crept away unnoticed, and father against all else! I crept away unnoticed. As the days went by mother noticed, of course,

Then father said gently:-"You don't have to do that, my child."
"Oh, but I want to work!" I cried eagerly. "Do you not see? To depend on just myself. I want to be free. I want to go away from here and earn my correlation."

When I had finished speaking the silence was aw

my own living." I was hurting them. I knew that; for now I was no longer an individuality, but just their little girl who wanted to go away from them. I was hurting them and I was hurting myself too, but I could not help it. I knew that I would go in spite of everything. Father must have seen this in my face.

What will you do, child? Where do you want to go?" he asked me. My heart sang with victory, "If you will send me to New York I will find work," I cried. "There

plenty of work in a big city!"
Oh, the pathos of that sanguine cry out of such But in the end I won, and it was agreed that

should go. Father was to send me to New York with enough money for one month's board. take no more. I left home one dreary November day. It was misting rain, so I said goodby to mother and the children at home. Father took me to the station. He was very quiet and I could not think

Father put me on the train and asked me four times if I had my ticket and the boarding house address (one I had obtained from a young girl milliner in town who had lived there). When the train started he kissed me twice and told me to be sure to wire when I got there.

I waved as far as I could see him. Then the train started in earnest, and I left them all behind—father, mother, the children and friends. The Little Minister, and, last of all, Farmer Green's haystack, looking